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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/532,867	10/14/2005	Fareeduddin Farooq	122003-05046967	9314

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MAYER, BROWN, ROWE & MAW LLP
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WASHINGTON, DC 20006

EXAMINER

HARLAN, ROBERT D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1713

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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09/21/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/532,867

Applicant(s)

FAROOQ ET AL

Examiner

Robert D. Harlan

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 June 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

1. The Amendment and Petition for Time Extension filed by Applicant on 06/22/2007 have been entered.

Response to Amendment/Arguments

2. Applicant's amendment and arguments filed on 06/22/2007 have been fully considered and they are found unpersuasive.

3. The rejection of claims 1, 6, 10 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention is withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

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5. Claims 1-3 5, 10-14 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Farooq et al., WO 00/24825 (hereinafter "Farooq"). Farooq teaches a process comprising mixing particles with a curable composition. See Farooq, Abstract; pages 5-7. Farooq further teaches curing said curable composition prior to the particles "substantially swelling" to form a thermoformable sheet. See Farooq, pages 7-9 and 16-17. The phrase "substantially swelling" is interpreted with the prior art reference. Farooq further discloses a flake prepared from the curable composition, which has a top and bottom surface and gloss appearance. See Farooq, page 17.

6. Patents are relevant for all that they contain. Farooq makes it clear that swelling is directly proportional to the comonomer content. See Farooq, page 8, lines 12-22. Thus, Farooq teaches the curing step occurring before any substantial swelling of the polymer particles.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

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(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 4, 6-9, 15 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Farooq

10. Farooq discloses a process for preparing thermoformable acrylic sheets that are prepared in a substantially identical to the processes of the present invention. Although Farooq does not disclose all the characteristics and properties of the sheets disclosed in the present claims, based on the substantially identical process, the Examiner has a reasonable basis to believe that the properties claimed in the present invention is inherent in the articles disclosed by Farooq.

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Because the PTO has no means to conduct analytical experiments, the burden of proof is shifted to the Applicants to prove that the properties are not inherent. See In re Fitzgerald, 619 F.2d 67, 205 USPQ 594 (CCPA 1980); In re Best, 195 USPQ 430 (CCPA 1977); In re Napier, 55 F.3d 610, 613, 34 USPQ2d 1782, 1784 (Fed. Cir. 1995).

11. The claiming of a new use, new function or unknown property which is inherently present in the prior art does not necessarily make the claim patentable. In re Best, 562 F.2d 1252, 1254, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977). However, the fact that a certain result or characteristic may occur or be present in the prior art is not sufficient to establish the inherency of that result or characteristic. See In re Rijckaert, 9 F.3d 1531, 1534, 28 USPQ2d 1955, 1957 (Fed. Cir. 1993) (reversed rejection because inherency was based on what would result due to optimization of conditions, not what was necessary due to optimization of conditions, not what was necessarily present in the prior art). "To establish inherency, the extrinsic evidence must make clear that the missing descriptive matter is necessarily present in the thing described in the reference, and that it would be so recognized by persons of ordinary skill. Inherency, however, may not be established by probabilities or possibilities. The

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mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances is not sufficient.'" See In re Robertson, 169 F.3d 743, 745, 49 USPQ2d 1949, 1950-51. "In relying upon the theory of inherency, the examiner must provide a basis in fact and/or technical reasoning to reasonably support the determination that the allegedly inherent characteristic necessarily flows from the teachings of the applied prior art." Ex parte Levy, 17 USPQ2d 1461, 1464 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1990).

12. Even if the disclosure of Farooq does not satisfy the requirements of 35 USC 102(b), it still would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the claimed sheet (article), because it appears that the claimed sheets are within the generic disclosure of Farooq and that a person of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to use the full teachings of Farooq to arrive at the claimed invention. Applicant has not demonstrated that the differences, if any, between the claimed sheets and the articles disclosed by Farooq give rise to unexpected results. The evidence presented to rebut the prima facie case of obviousness must be commensurate in scope with the claims to which it pertains. See In re Dill and Scales, 202 USPQ 805 (CCPA 1979).

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13. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

14. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert D. Harlan whose telephone number is (571) 272-1102. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 10 AM - 8 PM.

16. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David W. Wu can be

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reached on (571) 273-1114. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

17. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Robert D. Harlan
Primary Examiner
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rdh